

### **Talking Points**

#### **Eudora Welty 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration**

**10 a.m., Monday, April 13, 2009**

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(She was born on this day in 1909. You will cut a birthday cake.  
Notables present: Mary Alice White, director of the Eudora Welty  
House, and Archives and History Director Hank Holmes.)

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- Welcome to Eudora Welty's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration. Today we remember one of Mississippi's greatest treasures.
- From the windows of this home, Ms. Welty gazed out onto her beloved garden and created some of the most beautiful and touching stories.
- Ms. Welty was a keen observer of life – Southern life. She captured intimate and unique relationships within families. She was one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's greatest literary figures and a master of the short story.
- She earned numerous honors for her work – the Pulitzer Prize, the National Medal of Literature and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Ronald Reagan.
- Mississippi is blessed to be such fertile ground for literature. Like Faulkner, Ms. Welty's words paint a lasting impression of strength, truth and a way of life. Her work provides aspiring

writers an extremely high benchmark of honesty and compassion.

- Yet, she remained humble. Many of you still remember her as a kind woman who late in life continued to buy her own groceries from the old Jitney Jungle on the edge of Belhaven.
- In her generosity, she gave her home to the State of Mississippi after her death. I want to thank Mary Alice White, director of the Eudora Welty House, for taking excellent care of this historic home and gardens.
- I also would like to thank Hank Holmes and his staff at the Department of Archives and History for managing this museum honoring a great woman and a great Mississippian.
- Thank you and enjoy your visit to the Welty House.